

U.S. IS SAID TO BAR DEAL WITH ISRAEL

Weinberger Reported to Object to Its Price for Data on War

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 9 — Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger has rejected a proposed agreement with Israel under which Israeli forces would have shared military information they gained during the Lebanon conflict, Administration officials said today.

The officials said Mr. Weinberger decided against the agreement because he felt it would have trapped the United States into long-range commitments to Israel that he wanted to avoid. They said Mr. Weinberger distrusted present Israeli leaders, who demanded too much.

The Administration officials said Mr. Weinberger had decided, as one put it, "The information was not worth the price being asked." They tried to play down the value of the intelligence, tactical and technical information and said much had already been learned through normal military contacts.

What Israel Wanted

As a condition for sharing the information, Israel had insisted on sending Israeli experts to the United States with captured weapons and on receiving whatever analyses came from American research, officials said.

Mr. Weinberger was said to have rejected that provision because it might have given Israel access to sensitive United States military information that

he thought should not be given to another nation.

Israel also insisted on the right to veto the transfer of information and analyses to third countries, including members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and on measures to insure that sensitive data remained secret, they said.

The Israelis, according to diplomats here, expressed fears that Soviet intelligence agents who have penetrated West European Governments would find out what Israel had learned and would pass that information along to Arab allies of the Soviet Union.

American military officers, especially in the Air Force, were said to be disappointed because they had been looking forward to detailed reports on the performance of American-built F-15's and F-16's flown by the Israelis. Officially, the Air Force had no comment.

The commander of the Tactical Air Force, Gen. W. L. Creech, said last August that well-trained Israeli pilots in the F-15's and F-16's had shot down 85 Soviet-built MIG-23's and other aircraft flown by Syrian pilots. The Israelis lost 30 aircraft in those engagements, he said.

Defense Department officials said the military services wanted to send teams to Israel last fall, as they had after previous Israeli military operations, but that Mr. Weinberger was determined that they be restrained so as not to stampede policy making.

Instead, the Defense Secretary sent Andrew W. Marshall, a respected intelligence analyst, who reached an agreement with the Israelis in November. But Mr. Weinberger balked at the Israeli conditions, contending that Britain had not set such restrictions when reporting on its Falkland campaign.

Mr. Weinberger's decision came as tension between the United States and Israel has been increasing because of their differing views on how to bring peace and stability to the Middle East.

Weinberger's Skepticism

Defense Department officials said Mr. Weinberger had criticized Israel, especially since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last June, and had been skeptical of close American ties with Israel.

The officials asserted that Mr. Weinberger saw American interests in the Middle East in the broader context of the threat from the Soviet Union, which required the United States to improve its relations with Arab nations in hopes of containing Soviet influence.

Thus, the officials said, Mr. Weinberger had drawn public attention to the incident last week in which a United States Marine captain drew his pistol to confront an Israeli tank commander and to insist that three Israeli tanks withdraw from an area near a Marine checkpoint.

The officials said Mr. Weinberger believed that Defense Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel had ordered his forces to provoke the marines to divert Israeli public attention from his responsibility in the refugee massacre in Lebanon. An Israeli investigative panel recommended Tuesday that Mr. Sharon resign or be dismissed.

Israel's Suggestion Not Used

In a related development, a spokesman for the Marine Corps said that no special orders had been sent to the marines in Lebanon to prevent confrontations with Israeli forces there, nor was an exchange of liaison officers planned.

The Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Moshe Arens, lamented the lack of liaison between the Marines and Israeli forces and said that unless a method of continuous, direct contact was established, "you're asking for trouble."

Administration officials said that Mr. Weinberger had held up delivery of 75 new F-16 fighters to Israel while Israeli forces continued to occupy Lebanon. The Reagan Administration has been seeking the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon.

Other senior officials of the Administration have said recently, however, that military assistance would not be used as a lever to force Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon.

The Administration has also proposed a freeze on military assistance to Israel at the same level as last year, nearly \$2.5 billion. It had risen from \$2.2 billion under President Carter in 1981. Military assistance to Egypt, which was \$1.4 billion in 1981, was also frozen at last year's level, \$2.1 billion.